

Individual Executive Member Decision

Request to go out to consultation on the Housing Grants and Loans Policy Made under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance - England and Wales) Order 2002 – Supporting Information

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the private sector housing stock is safe and healthy. This policy sets out the criteria and conditions by which the Council will assist with essential repairs to improve living conditions in the private sector, complete mandatory and discretionary disabled adaptations and provide an overview of the assistance available to bring empty properties back into use.
- 1.2 The Housing Grants and Loans Policy made in under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance – England and Wales) order 2002 will replace the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2009.
- 1.3 As the most recent, Private Sector Condition Survey did not identify any specific geographical areas or types of properties that present serious problems, the format of the new policy is client based, rather than theme based and focuses upon vulnerable people.
- 1.4 The following Grants and Loans form part of the policy
 - Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (MDFG)
 - Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DDFG)
 - Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grant (HRA)
 - Flexible Home Improvement Loans (FHIL's)
 - Flexible Empty Homes Loans
 - Empty Home Private Sector Leasing Scheme
- 1.5 Vulnerability linked with age and disability can be a potential barrier to ensuring a property is in maintained in good repair. The policy is focused towards the qualifying criteria being linked to these vulnerabilities.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 None

3. Proposals

- 3.1 This report is seeking permission from the Portfolio Holder for the Housing Service to publically consult on the Draft Housing Grant and Loans policy.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder agrees to the Housing Grant and Loans policy being approved for consultation.

Background Papers:

None.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval ☐

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council ☐

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position ☐

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months ☐

Item is Urgent Key Decision ☐

Report is to note only ☐

Wards affected:

District wide Policy

Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aims:

X P&S – Protect and support those who need it

X HQL – Maintain a high quality of life within our communities

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

X P&S1 – Good at safeguarding children and vulnerable adults

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy aims and priorities by supporting vulnerable households to maintain the condition of their property or seeking adaptations to make the home more suitable for their needs.

Officer details:

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Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Name of policy, strategy or function:	Housing Grants and Loans Policy
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	Version 1
Owner of item being assessed:	Cathy Dodson
Name of assessor:	Cathy Dodson
Date of assessment:	4.1.15

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	Yes	New or proposed	No
Strategy	No	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes
Function	No	Is changing	Yes
Service	No		

1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy function or service and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	This policy provides an overview of the Mandatory and Discretionary Grants and Loans available to improve or adapt accommodation within the District.
Objectives:	To improve the overall condition of Private Sector Housing including that available to private rent and ensure that homes are adapted to adequately meet the needs of disabled clients.
Outcomes:	Home Improvements made to properties identified as requiring specific repairs. Adaptations made to properties where the household has an identified need for modifications.
Benefits:	Disabled Service users are able to sustain a level of independence. Private Sector Housing is maintained to a higher standard bring health and wellbeing benefits.

2. Note which groups may be affected by the policy, strategy, function or
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service. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Age	Vulnerability linked with age is a key factor and is also an eligibly criteria for some Loans. The procedures in this policy will be used to identify households where age is a determining factor in the quality of accommodation.	Case files, Quarterly returns,
Disability	Disability is a key factor where people are unable to remain in their own home due to lack of suitable adaptations to the property.	Case files, Quarterly returns,
Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.	No evidence that these groups will be unduly affected	
Further Comments relating to the item:		
The EIA indicates that vulnerable older and disabled people, should be able to access appropriate housing-related support and assistance to remain in their own homes in the private sector. This Policy sets out the criteria by which West Berkshire Council can assist these households and will aim to build services around this understanding to ensure that people receive services appropriate to their needs.		

3. Result	
Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	No
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	No
<p>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</p> <p>The policy will not have an adverse impact as it will improve their living conditions.</p>	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	No

Name: Cathy Dodson

Date: 4.1.15

Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, the Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) for publication on the WBC website.